

## The Night I

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Summary: Jake and Cassie spend the night together, and there are some consequences...

## The Night I

[a/n: First of all let me stress that in this story Jake and Cassie are in High School, they are older teens here.]

( Cassie )

I lay in bed, the memories of the horrific battle playing through my mind again and again. The blood everywhere, the screams of pain, bellows of anguish sounded through my tortured mind. It had been a slaughter; we'd made a horrible mistake. We'd gone in there thinking to find an army of Hork-Bajir. Instead there had been human-controllers. We'd tried to retreat, but they wouldn't let us. They had fired upon us, we'd had no choice, fight or die. Their frail human bodies had no chance against us, it had been over in a matter of minutes, and the ground was a carpet of bodies. I covered my ears with my hands, trying to forget. I sat up; I couldn't stay here any longer. I opened up my window and began to morph. When the morph was complete I flew away, a great horned owl. I flew around mindlessly until I found myself in front of Jake's house. I suddenly had a desperate need to feel the comfort only his presence could give. His window was open and I flew in, demorphed and locked the door. Then I turned to look at Jake. He was asleep, his dark hair tousled. His expression appeared peaceful but I could see the inner torment. I went to him and climbed under the covers, holding him close and the pressure on my chest began to ease. His arms instinctively closed around me, and I slipped away into slumber. I awoke a half-hour later to Jake's mumbling he was talking in his sleep. I shook him gently. "Jake, wake up." I whispered. His eyes opened slowly. They were pools of anguish. My heart cried out for him. "Cassie?" He asked, confused, I nodded. "What are you doing here?" he asked. "I couldn't be at home, but I couldn't be alone either. I needed to be with you," I whispered. "Thank you." He replied. I was confused. "Why?" I asked. "Because I need to be with you too." He answered. I smiled a little,

as much as I could and leaned into him. "It was horrible. How much more can we take?" I asked. "I don't know, but we have to. Until it's over, then we can think about it." He told me. I flipped over and looked at him. "I don't know if I can do that, just forget all the bad memories, because there are so many of them." I said. "I know." He replied. Slowly he leaned in and kissed me lightly. I pulled back a little then leaned forward and kissed him in return. Did I want this? I thought to myself. Yes, I did. I could have one night, one night to forget all the pain, all the horror. I didn't protest as he rolled me to my back.

Jake was already awake when I woke up the next morning. I smiled "Good morning," I said quietly. " 'Morning," he whispered. "I should probably go before you parents get back," I said. "Yeah, they'll be back pretty soon." He said looking at the clock. "I don't want to go," I said. "I don't want you to go either," he said. "But, I have to," I finished, and leaned in to kiss him. Then I stood up and got into my morphing suit. "You know, this can't happen again," Jake said. "I know," I replied. Then I gave him a kiss and morphed. As I flew out the window I heard him say. "Love you." {Love you too.} I said. I went in through my window and landed on my bed, then demorphed. I sat there for a moment then got up to take a shower and dress. It was Saturday so I didn't have school. After I was finished I went downstairs. My parents were in the kitchen, talking and eating breakfast. Had they noticed I was gone? My mom smiled at me and handed me a muffin. I sat down, relieved. Everything is going to be fine, I thought.

3 months later... I felt ill, I glanced at the door wondering if I could make it. I jumped out of bed and ran into the bathroom and threw up. Then I washed my face in the sink and rinsed my mouth out. What was going on? I had been sick every morning for the last week and a half. Something pricked the back of my mind but I ignored it and opened the door to leave. My mom was standing there with an unreadable expression on her face. "Cassie, can I talk to you for a moment?" she asked. "Sure mom," I said and followed her into my room. I sat on the bed and she sat on the chair for my desk. "Cassie," she began, then swallowed and started over again. "Cassie, you've been sick every morning for a while now, and I've noticed that you have gained a little weight. Could, could you be pregnant?" she asked, her face filled with dread. The blood drained from my face and my stomach clenched. I tried to talk but no sound came out. I tried "Oh my God," I croaked. "Oh, Cassie," My mom said, her eyes filling with tears, her head dropped to her hands, I just sat there in shock. I was going to have a baby, I thought dazed. My mom was looking at me. "What do you want to do?" she asked. "I'm going to have it," I said firmly, she nodded. "Who?" she asked. I looked at her. "Jake," I said. "Maybe, you should go stay with Grandma," she said after a while. I stared at her. "You're ashamed of me!" I said. She shook her head fiercely. "No, it's just that it might be easier there, people are more accepting of things like this." My mom said. It hurt, but I agreed. "Ok," I said. She patted my shoulder. "I'll tell your father," she said. I groaned. "Oh God," I said. "Everything is going to be fine," she said. Then she left. What was I going to do? Tell Jake? No, he already had so much to worry about. I wouldn't tell any of them, they would think that I abandoned them but I had to protect my baby and this was the only way I knew how.

The next day "So you're just leaving?" Rachel demanded. "Yeah, I have a reason." I said softly. "But you can't tell us." Marco stated

flatly. I nodded. "Sure, you're afraid, that's why. You don't think we're afraid?" He said. "It's not that, it's something else something very important and I can't tell you." I said. They just stared at me coldly, except for Ax, and Jake wouldn't even look at me. "Yeah, well I'll see you." Marco said and stalked out. Rachel and Tobias right behind him. Jake looked at me once, then silently walked away. Only Ax was left. "They do not realize, but I have been studying humans. You will lose your morphing power soon; it is to protect the child from any damage. Good luck, my friend." Ax said kindly. "How, how did you know?" I stuttered. He smiled. "I am very observant." Were all he said, then he left as well. I looked around the barn, my eyes watering, and then I went to the car where my mom was waiting to take me to the airport.

I felt the plane touch the ground 6 hours later. I leaned my head back against the seat. I waited until almost everyone was off, then I walked down the long hallway to the terminal, my grandma was waiting there, she smiled softly at me. "Let's get you home, you need lots of rest, and you look exhausted." she said. I was immensely relieved. I had been pretty sure my grandma wouldn't judge me, but I had still been a little worried. Hopefully school here would be accepting.

I took a deep breath and stepped out of my grandma's car as we pulled up to my new high school. I looked down at myself, I was wearing loose fitting overalls and a T-shirt, and my school stuff was all in my backpack. I headed towards the front entrance; first I went to the office to get my schedule. Once I had that in hand I went to look for my locker. After I put most of my things away, I looked at my schedule. Great, gym. Working out was okay, but I didn't want to over-do it, and I knew that high school gym teachers could be killer. Deal with that when the time comes, I thought, which wouldn't be until third period. First was French, I got my map out and headed to the room. It was mostly full when I arrived. I went to the front to talk to the teacher. "Yes?" She asked. "My name is Cassie, I'm new here." I said. "Oh yes, ok you can sit, here next to Jen." she said pointing to a seat in the middle next to a pretty brunette girl. I sat down. "Hi, my name's Jen. Oops, Je m'apelle Jen." she said rolling her eyes. I responded in kind. "Cassie." "So why did you move here?" she asked curiously. I paused. "Um," I said. "If you don't want to talk about it that's okay," she said. "Thanks, I'm sure you'll find out eventually though." I said. "Oh, what are you pregnant or something?" she joked in a low voice. I stared at her. "Oh! Oh, um sorry." she said embarrassed. "That's okay, still want to talk to the pregnant girl?" I asked half joking. "Of course." she said smiling, and I knew I had a friend. "So let me see your schedule," she said and I handed it to her. "Hey, we have 2 classes besides this together. History and biology. Oh, gym with Mr. Lunden." she said. "He bad?" I asked. "Yeah, he runs the kids to the ground, like 2 milers every day along with really tough aerobics. But hey you should have an excuse, will well, you know." she said. "How could I forget?" I asked with a roll of my eyes. We talked all through class, much to the distress of Madame Braud. Biology was next so that went okay, Jen was the only one I told about the baby, the other kids seems okay, but I didn't feel as comfortable sharing such a personal secret with them, I guess Jen got the picture and she didn't tell anyone. I headed for 3rd period. This was the one class I was nervous about, especially from what I had been told. When I went into the gym I saw the teacher standing up at the front. I walked up to him slowly. "Mr. Lunden?" I asked. "Yes?" he asked, I could tell he wasn't the nicest person in the world from that one word. "I need to

talk to you, you see I won't be able work very hard in this class." I said. He raised an eyebrow. "Oh really? I think you will, unless you have terminal cancer you will work just as hard as anyone else." he said. "No, I can't really." I said. "I can bring in a note." "And what is your reason? I've gotten just about every one in the book," he said. I was getting angry, another delight of pregnancy, mood swings. "I have a pretty good one. Pregnancy." I snapped. He was startled to say the least. "Oh, Um, take a seat over there." he stuttered, motioning towards the bench.

I walked over and sat down on the bench, leaned back and closed my eyes. I was exhausted, and I felt a little nauseated, I thought morning sickness was supposed to be in the morning, and how long was this going to last? By some miracle I must have dosed off, when I woke up the period was almost over, I could see people looking over at me, giving me some pretty strange looks, I guess any would to a girl who fell asleep in a deafening gym with yelling kids and gym teachers. I watched everyone file into the locker rooms, when the bell rang I left, I had Math next, the rest of the day went fairly normal, no one else found out about the baby and people were pretty friendly, and I knew that I had found a real friend in Jen. By the time I got home to my grandma's I felt like I was going to fall over. "Argh, how long is this going to last?" I moaned to my grandma. "How long is what going to last?" She asked. "I am so tired and what about morning sickness being a morning thing?" I said. "Well the exhaustion should pass in a month and a half or so, and the morning sickness as well. It's all part of having a baby Cassie." She said gently. "Grandma?" I asked, my voice wavering. "Are you ashamed of me?" She came over quickly and hugged me tightly. "Of course I'm not, of course not." She said comfortingly. "I'm scared," I said. "I know, I know." She said, slowly rubbing my back. "Why don't you go take a little nap?" she asked. I nodded and went up to my new room. A week later the rest of my new school found out about my 'condition'. I was sitting in French, praying that I wouldn't be sick, I had to run out of the room because of it the last two days. No such luck I felt the bile rise in my throat. I stood up quickly. "Madame, I have to use the bathroom," I said before I shot out of there. Luckily I made it to the bathroom. I wiped my face and washed out my mouth, and chewed a piece of big red I had in my pocket for a moment to hide any bad breath. I slowly walked back to class, spitting out my gum just before I entered. I smiled weakly at the teacher and sat down. "You okay?" Jen whispered. I nodded slightly. "So, how long you been knocked up for?" A guy behind me snickered. I whipped around and glared daggers at him, at that moment I wished for Rachel's ability to make anyone fell as if they were the lowest being with a single look. The rest of the class tittered in laughter and I did my best to ignore them. I guess the news got around fairly quickly, people who never would have noticed me before, stared curiously. What am I? A circus act, I thought savagely. At the moment there was nothing more that I'd like to do than morph to osprey, fly to Jake and hit him over the head with something hard. However neither was possible, I had discovered that I had lost my morphing ability the day before, and if I attacked Jake, he'd definitely want to know why. I tried my best to ignore them and focus on the nice people I had met, Jen of course didn't tease me at all, and most people didn't but there was a few. 4 months later, I was due in about 1 month and I was not a happy camper, I was bulky, uncomfortable and I couldn't see my feet. School had ended a while before and I was immensely grateful. Despite their first reaction people had actually been very nice. My parents wanted me to come home, they wanted me to have the baby by them, I was not

sure what to do, I still hadn't told Jake, and my parents weren't very happy with that fact. Through all my nervousness, I knew that I would have to tell him sometime. So there I was, riding on a train back home (I couldn't fly because of risks of going into premature labor), very different from when I had left. My parents were waiting for me in the station. Clumsily I walked up to them. My mom smiled warmly and hugged me. Nervously I faced my father. He hadn't said hardly anything to me since he found out about the baby. He smiled and hugged me awkwardly as well, I was relieved. "Ready to go home?" he asked. I nodded tiredly and we grabbed my bags and headed home. I knew tomorrow was my mother's birthday. "So what are you guys going to do tomorrow?" I asked that night as we sat down to dinner. My mom looked startled. "Oh nothing, I thought that we should stay home with you," she said. I rolled my eyes. "Mom, you guys go out, I can handle myself. Besides, you always go out on your birthday, something would feel wrong if you didn't." I said smiling. My dad grabbed my mom's hand. "Her majesty had spoken." He joked. She nodded her consent, "Okay, we'll go," she said. That night I lay in bed, staring out the window and the moon bathed night. How my life had changed. I mean, being an animorph was enough in itself, but I had a baby to deal with as well. Just then he decided to make his presence known, he let out a big kick. I smiled and placed my hand on my stomach. Then I closed my eyes and drifted off to sleep. When I woke the next morning my parents were gone; my mom's birthday always involved an all day activity. It was about 10, much later than I slept before the baby. I got up and showered and dressed then went downstairs. My mom and dad had both ordered me to stay out of the barn and I didn't argue with their decision. I sat on the porch and read a book until lunchtime, then I went inside to eat. Slowly I made my lunch and sat down. I heard the doorbell ring. Ugh, I didn't want to stand up. "Come in." I called. After a moment I heard the door open and the sound of footsteps. Rachel, Marco, Jake, Tobias and Ax all walked into the kitchen. I almost choked on the piece of apple I was swallowing. "What are you doing here?" I asked. "We were going to ask you the same question." Marco said coldly. I was confused at first, I mean, couldn't they see that I was pregnant? No, they couldn't they table hid the fact. "I live here." I said. "We noticed, so you leave for like four months, then you come back, no calls even." Rachel said. I could tell that she was angry. BRRRING!! The phone rang. It was the portable and sitting right on the table. I picked it up automatically. "Hello?" I said. "Hey Cassie? It's Jen, how are you?" She said. "Jen, hi." I said, glancing at the others. They just watched me. "So how are you? How's the baby, can't wait for it to be born huh? I wish I were there, I'm sure he or she, will be beautiful." Jen said. I smiled slightly. "Yeah we'-, I'm fine." I said. "Let me guess you have people over," she said. "Yeah, kinda. Do you mind?" I asked. "No, hey. Is he there?" She asked. "Yeah, well I'll talk to you later." I said. I could almost see her rolling her eyes. "Bye, Cassie and tell him. Wait, he should be able to see." She said. "I'm sitting down, and I'm sure I can't hide it." I whispered. "See you." And I hung up. "Friend of yours?" Tobias asked. "Yeah." I said. I motioned to the chairs. "By all means, sit down." I said. They all grabbed chairs and sat down, all across from me except for Ax. I felt like was on trial or something. "Well? Would you like to explain why you left?" Rachel said. Jake had been completely silent. "I- I," I stuttered. Now that the time was here, I was really nervous. But I couldn't exactly hide it, it was glaringly obvious. Just stand up Cassie, all you have to do is stand up. I told myself, but I was very, very nervous. How would they, how would he react? I looked over at Ax, he smiled. The only kind face in the room. "Well?"

Jake demanded, the first thing he said. "Well I had a very good reason, I had to protect someone." I said slowly. "Protect who?" Rachel asked impatiently. "Someone very important." I replied, stalling. "Cassie, will you just tell us already?" Marco demanded. "My baby." I said. "What baby, you don't have a baby." Tobias stuttered. Jake got a little pale. "I will, in a few weeks." I said. I looked straight at Jake. His face was completely white. Everyone except for Ax, just stared at me. Impatiently, I awkwardly stood up. I turned around, arms held out. "Oh. My. God." Rachel said. "Oh my God." Jake seconded and rested his head on the table. "Oh my god." He repeated. I sat back down, Jake pulled his head up and looked at me, his eyes were huge in his face. "Oh, God." He said. "Why the hell didn't you tell me?" he asked. One by one everyone looked at him. "You?!" Marco exclaimed. Jake just looked at him, giving him an 'are you a complete idiot?' look. "Obviously." Rachel muttered. "We seriously need to talk." Jake said and started to walk out of the room. I carefully got up and followed him. "I'll be back, feel free to look through the fridge." I said, trying to act normal to forget my nervousness. I shut the door and turned to Jake, he had an unreadable look in his eyes, but at the moment I forgot my nervousness and all I could think about was how much I loved him. "Cassie!" Was all he said, he stared at me, as if memorizing my face. "Why didn't you tell me about the baby?" he asked. "I was worried, you already had so much to deal with, being the leader of the animorphs, regular life, then just being a normal member of the team." I said. "Cassie, I would have, I would have been there." He said. "I know." I replied. "So you really didn't love me enough to trust me to be able to handle it did you?" he asked, despaired. "No, that's not it!" I cried. I walked up to him. "Jake, it wasn't that I didn't love you enough, it was that I loved you so much, I was trying to protect you, you already had so much to deal with." I said. "You mean you still love me?" he asked. I smiled gently. "Of course I do." I said. He leaned down and kissed me. "I love you too." He whispered against my mouth. I put my arms around him and hugged him the best I could with my current figure. The baby decided to kick then. "Oh!" I said. He pulled away. "What?" he asked alarmed. "She kicked." I said. "Really?" he asked. I took his hand and put it where the baby had kicked. "She may do it again." I said. We waited a moment and then he kicked again. Jake broke out into a wide grin. "Hey!" he exclaimed. "So we're going to be parents huh?" he said. I smiled. "Most certainly." I said. "Whoa, what am I going to tell my parent?" he asked. He looked nervous. "I suggest the truth." I said. He nodded. "Well ready to go see the others?" He asked. "You have no idea." I said smiling. We walked back to the kitchen where Rachel, Marco and Tobias were watching Ax try to eat an orange without peeling it first. They looked up when we walked in. "So!" Marco said. "Everything's fine." Jake said. They smiled. Rachel got up and gave me a big hug. Then she did something very un-Rachel, she cried a little. "Cassie, why didn't you tell me? I'm your best friend, I wanted to be there to be excited with you and look for cute little baby things. Like we planned when we were little!" she wailed. The others looked shocked, but I knew of the other side of Rachel that she rarely showed to anyone. "We have a few weeks." I said smiling. She nodded. "You're going to have the most fashionably dressed baby in history." She declared. "So do you know if it's a boy or a girl?" Tobias asked. I nodded. I opened my mouth to say. "Wait, can I know one thing before everyone else?" Jake asked. I nodded. I leaned over and whispered in his ear. He smiled widely. "A girl." I said. "So did you pick out a name?" Marco asked. I shook my head. "No, I was kind of hoping!" I looked at Jake. "Really? I can help?" he asked. "Who

else?" I asked. "Well, I think that we should probably leave." Rachel said. "Why, I-" Marco began. Rachel glared at him. "Oh, yeah. I have to go too." He said, tactfully they all left. "Soâ€¦names." Jake said. We talked about it for about an hour, listing all the names we knew, like Michelle, Kate, Kristin "You know, this is a unusual name, but I don't knowâ€¦" he said after awhile. I raised an eyebrow. "What?" I asked. "Amia." He said. I repeated it, trying it out. "It's beautiful." I said. "It means love." He said. I smiled at him. "Amia." I said. "What about a middle name?" he asked. "Well, was thinking, Grace." I said. "Amia Grace?" he asked. "That sounds good." I said. He smiled. "Amia Grace, a beautiful name." I said. "So, when are we going to tell my parents?" he asked. "Do you want me to come with?" I asked. He shook his head. "I want to tell them slowly, if they saw you, they'd know right away." He said with a grin. He looked at the clock and frowned. "As much as I don't want to go, I have to. Mom has this late luncheon planned." He said. "Ok, I'll see you later." I said. He leaned forward and kissed me gently. "Later." Then he got up and left. I watched out the door he walked through and smiled.

(Jake)

I walked out of Cassie's house. My head was still ringing, I felt like I had been punched in the stomach when she stood up. A baby, I was going to be a father. It was unbelievable. I shook my head as I walked. Cassie and I were going to have a baby, a little girl. What kind of parents were we going to be? What if something happened to one of us, or both of us? What would happen to Amia? Even though I had just found out about her, what I felt amazed me. That was our baby there, my daughter. I hadn't even met her, but I already loved her more than I believed possible. Slowly I reached my house. My mom and dad were home. As well as Tom. They were almost ready to eat when I walked in. "Jake, right on time." My mom said. "Uh, Mom, Dad. I need to tell you something." I said. "Just a minute sweetie. Sit down." She said. I took my place at the table, next to Tom. "Hey midget, where were you?" he asked. "I smiled fakly at him. "Cassie's." I said. "I thought she bailed." Tom said. I gritted my teeth. "She came back." I said. "Oh really, anything interesting happen?" he asked. "Like you wouldn't believe." I replied. My mom and dad sat down and talked for about 10 minutes, I couldn't get a word in. Then I guess my mom remembered I wanted to tell her something. "Oh, Jake what was it you wanted to say?" she asked absentmindedly. "Um, I-I," I stammered. I began again. "Cassie, and me we," I said. My dad frowned. "What is it Jake?" he asked. "Cassie's going to have a baby." I blurted. They stared at me. "Oh, sweetie. The poor thing." She said. I stared at her. Poor thing? Then I realized, they probably thought this was a recent thing, they didn't know it was mom. "No, mom. She's pregnant, very pregnant. As in going to have a baby any week now." I said. They stared at me; they still didn't get it. "As in, me and Cassie are going to have a baby." I pressed. My mom went totally pale, I didn't know it was possible to look that pale and still be alive. "What!" my dad yelled. "Jake, how could you let this happen." My mom cried. "It wasn't a planned thing, Mom." I said. "Well I should hope not!" my dad shouted. "How could you be so irresponsible, why didn't you tell us?" "I didn't know!" I exclaimed, "She just told me today." "How do you know it's yours?" my dad asked. "I cannot believe you just said that!" I yelled. "I know, I know, of course it is. I know she isn't that kind of girl." He said, burying his head in his hands. "Dad, I know this is a shock, imagine how I felt. But it's a happening thing, and I want to be a part of their

lives. I mean, that's my baby." I said, still slightly awed by it all. My mom smiled at me sadly. "At least you accepting your responsibility, that's more than a lot of young men your age do." He said. "It's just, I mean hard to grasp, what I'm feeling, it'sâ€¦" I said. "I know, I have 2 children." Dad said. I grinned at him. "It's a girl you know, a baby girl. Cassie and I picked out a name." I said. "So we're going to have a grand-daughter." My dad said grabbing my mom's hand and squeezing it comfortingly. "So what name did you choose?" my mom asked, wiping away her tears. "Amia Grace." I said. "Lovely." My mom said. "Good, she won't have to grow up with a bad name at least, Thank God you didn't name her something horrible, I can think of a few things." He said. Tom hadn't said anything, I glanced at him. He looked at me through calculating eyes. I felt fear wash through me, these last few months. I had gotten the suspicion that Tom was catching on to me. Now I had more to lose, much more. Amia and Cassieâ€¦

(Cassie)

Jake's parents and mine were going to have dinner together, all of us in one room, at my house. They hadn't seen me yet; I was more than nervous. I glanced at the clock, they should be here any minute, I thought. I was waiting in the living room; my parents were in the kitchen. Suddenly I heard the doorbell, I stood up clumsily. "I'll get it." I heard my dad yell. I heard his footsteps nearing the front door; I paced nervously around the room. I heard Jake and his parents, I knew Jake was nervous too, he hadn't seen my parents in a while, not since the pregnancy had been found out. "Cassie, they're here." My mom said. "I know." I said and walked into the front walkway. To my relief they took my appearance in stride. Jake's mom smiled and gave me a small side hug and Jake's dad smiled as well. I looked at Jake; he looked back with a nervous gaze. I smiled a little, my own apprehensiveness showing I knew. "Well, we have dinner ready, would you like to come sit down." My mom said. His parents nodded and we all went into the kitchen. I sat next to Jake at the table; my mom was next to me and the end, my dad across from me, Jake's dad next to mine, and his mom and the other end. I looked at them nervously. My mom passed around a bowl of lettuce for a salad. I scooped some into my bowl and passed it on. "So, how is everything going?" Jake's mom asked. There was a chorus of 'okay's' and 'not bad's'. After we were finished with our salad my mom began to pass around the spaghetti. My father cleared his throat. "Well I think we all know why we're here." He said. Jake and I shared a nervous glance, and nodded warily. "We're her to discuss Jake, Cassie and the baby." Jake's dad said. All of their faces grew serious. I shifted uneasily in my chair. "Like what kind of things?" Jake asked. "Where the baby will live, visitation, etc." My dad said. "Visitation? You act like it will be a scheduled thing." I said. "We assumed that we would be an equal part of Amia's life." Jake said. I nodded agreement. They all shared a glance. "You're still children yourselves. We're just worried you're getting in too deep." My mom said. I stared at her. "Getting in too deep! I think it's already a little late for that!" I said. She looked at me with a pained expression on her face. "We know that we have assumed you will keep the baby, but perhaps a better option would be," she was saying. I cut her off. "Forget it, there is no way she will go up for adoption." I said flatly. Jake grabbed my hand under the table and squeezed tightly. They looked at us. "You don't know what you're getting into. A child is a large responsibility." Jake's dad said. "Of course it's a large responsibility! Don't you think we know that?"



It wasn't something that we planned, but it's happened and there are too many risks in giving her up for adoption, there is just no way." Jake said bluntly. He had on his leader mask, the expression he had just before going into a battle, his face was tight and determined, and anyone looking at it would certainly get a chill from the strength and power wavering right beneath the surface. Everyone stared at him in shock for a moment. Then his father sputtered. "You don't know anything about this much of a responsibility. You're just a child." Jake stared at him. "If you only knew. If you only knew what I know about responsibility, and we are not children." Jake said quietly. "No we're not." I seconded. "What the hell are you talking about?" Jake's mom asked. I could tell that Jake was about to spill all. I grabbed his arm and squeezed it. "Jake. No." I said. He relaxed. "You're right." He said to me. To them he said. "This is our daughter and we are keeping her, no matter what." They sighed, and my father rubbed his temples. "Obviously there is no way we can change your mind, but we still have a lot to discuss." He said. "Where will she stay? Day-care services?" My mom said. "When she's first born she will obviously stay with me, but eventually we'll rotate." I said. Jake nodded, and our parents looked at ease with that. "About day-care. We don't really know. That won't be a problem during the summer, but for school—" I said. Jake spoke up. "Actually the high school is starting a new program this coming school year. A lot of teen parents at the school have that same problem and they've approved to have a day-care for the students children." We talked fairly late that night until I pleaded exhaustion and we all parted for the night. They tactfully let Jake and me alone for a moment. "We can do this." Jake said. I looked into his eyes. "I know, if we can do what we've been doing, then we can do anything." I said. He nodded. "Well, I have to go to some class tomorrow because of all the school I missed from various um, days that I was absent, summer school. But you know where I'll be if I'm needed," he said and kissed me lightly, then left. I heard my parents talking to Jake's as I walked to my room; they had yet to go out to the car. "Something else is up, I can feel it. Did you see the way they looked tonight? And what Jake said, something is definitely wrong." Jake's dad said. "Yes, and I think it's probably been happening for a while, I noticed it a long time ago, but I figured it was a phase. It's just gone too far." My dad said. I closed my eyes and leaned my head against the wall. This was too much, I was going to have a baby, I was in the middle of a war with the yeerks, and even though I was temporarily out of commission I knew that after Amia was born I would eventually be going back. And now my parents were catching on that something was seriously wrong. I took a deep breath and walked up the stairs. The next morning I awoke with a dull ache in my lower back. I ignored it and went to take a shower. When I was done I dressed and went down stairs. It was mid-afternoon when the first pain struck; I was walking to the living room. I gasped and grabbed the railing for support. I still had two more weeks to go, I thought. My mom was just coming down the stairs; she saw the expression on my face and her eyes widened. "Cassie? What's wrong?" she asked. "I think I had a contraction." I said shakily. "Ok, let's go to the hospital." She said surprisingly calm. My father was out for the day so we loaded into the car and drove to the hospital. My next contraction was on the way to the hospital, about 20 minutes after the first one. "Well, they aren't close together," my mom commented. As soon as we got to the hospital I was set up in a room. "Mom? Could you call Jake? He should be at the school, summer school." I said. She nodded and went to make the call.

(Jake)

I was sitting in my summer school class, three hours of History each day, it was inhumane. And of course on this particular day that my mind was doing somersaults and I just wanted to relax and think, we had to go on an excursion. Juan came up to me as we were walking through the museum. "Hey Jake, what's on your mind?" he asked. My other non-animorph friends Matt and Jared came up as well, we had all failed history that year for some reason or another. "Yeah man you look a little strange." Jared said. I didn't know whether or not to tell them, but they would find out sooner or later and as shook up about the baby as I was I was also a little excited. "You will never in a million years guess." I said. "What? The world coming to an end?" Matt joked. I almost shuttered, that was close to a truth, but not the one I was thinking about. "Cassie came back, and well um, she's pregnant." I said. They jerked in surprise, all of them, which was fairly amusing to see. "Pregnant?" Matt said. "Yours?" Juan asked, at the same time. I answered yes to both. "Jake, man." Was all Jared could say. "I know, I mean I almost can't believe it, I mean in like two weeks I'm going to be a dad. It's a girl, we're going to name her Amia Grace." I said for no reason. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Marco practically running toward me. "Uh, Jake man, come on you really need to come." He stammered. "Why?" I asked confused. "It's um, Cassie, she's she's." he said. "The baby?" I asked. He nodded vigorously. "But it's not, I mean, two weeks." I said. He shook his head, then nodded it. "Well I guess she's getting an early start, it's been like 4 hours, we couldn't find you!" Marco exclaimed. "Well, how are we supposed to get there?" I practically yelled, I hadn't thought about morphing, my mind was jammed. "What's going on?" my teacher demanded, coming over, the rest of the class as well. I stared at him dumbly. "I, she, we're, I mean I have to." I stuttered, at the same time Marco was saying. "His, she uh, baby you see we have to." I looked at him. "Why are you nervous!" I asked. "Damnit, she's my friend! Nothing like this has ever happened." Marco said. "What is going on?" my teacher asked again. "Yeah, well I think that his girlfriend is having a baby." Matt said. "A baby? Your girlfriend? Aren't you a little young?" My teacher asked. I stared at him. "What does that have to do with anything? She's I mean we're, I have to go to the hospital." I said. "I can drive you, I have a car." One girl offered. I nodded vigorously. "Let's go." I said. She motioned me to the entrance and Marco and I followed her out. She smiled slightly at my nervousness. "So who's your girlfriend?" she asked as we pulled onto the street. "Cassie \*\*\*\*\*." I said. She looked surprised. "Really? I knew her before she moved." She said. I was too nervous to talk, but Marco had calmed down a little. I thanked her and hopped out of the car and jogged into the hospital, forgetting to thank her. "You're welcome!" she yelled out the window, laughing as she said it. I found out where Cassie was and went there as quickly as I could. The next hours were the most nervous of my entire life until that point I think.

(Cassie)

I looked down into the face of my sleeping daughter. It had been two days since her birth and I was back home. There had been no complications, I was young and healthy and she was perfect. Jake stood behind me. "I almost can't believe it." He whispered. "I know." I said quietly. He touched her small hand gently, and I put her into her bassinet. Then we slowly walked out of the room that had been converted into a small bedroom for her. I was still tired from the

labor and went to my room and sat on the bed, I turned on the baby monitor that had been placed there. Jake sat on the bed next to me and I laid my head tiredly against his shoulder. We leaned back and I drowsed comfortably. "You know, I never thought that I could love someone as much as I love you and Amia." He said quietly. I let him speak. "I've felt so dead for the past few years, and nowâ€¦I just can't explain it." He said. "I know." I said softly. "I love you too." I said. He paused. "What is it?" I asked. Something was wrong, I could feel it. "Jake?" I asked again. He hesitated then spoke up. "Me, and the rest of us. We have a mission tonight. To the yeerk pool, Erek gave us some information and we have to go down there." He said. "Why? What is it?" I asked. "It's nothing." He said. I turned to look at him. "Jake, don't even try it." I said sternly. His gaze searched mine. "It's a new type of Kandrona, more powerful than the other. It doesn't just beam the rays into the pool; it feeds the yeerks directly when they are inside their hosts. They would have no need to exit the host body for replenishment every three days, the Kandrona would broadcast over a fairly large distance and as long as they were in that area for a certain length, they'll be fine." He said quietly. My heart stopped, the fact that the yeerks had to evacuate their hosts was one of our main advantages, if this was true then it had to be stopped. "Jake, let me go with you. My morphing ability is back, I," I said. He cut me off. "No. You're not coming, eventually but right now Amia is too little, if something were to happen to the both of us she would have no protection." He said. Tears welled in my eyes and I knew he was right. He had gone into dangerous missions before but I had always been there at his side, this was different. He kissed me softly. "I have to go, take care of our daughter." He said. "Cassie, this is one of the most dangerous missions we've ever had, and I know that you know that. They have the pool so well defended, and if something happens to me," he said. I protested at that but he silenced me. "If anything happens to me, I want you to keep this for Amia until she is older." He said handing me a letter. I took it and set it next to me, then I stood and hugged him tightly. "God, I love you so much." He whispered in my ear. "I love you too." I said and squeezed tightly. He pulled away. "I have to go." He said, he kissed me lovingly and left. I sat down on the bed and let the tears run down my face. I stayed awake all night, rocking Amia most of the time, basking in the comfort only my child could give. I put her in her cradle and walked to the window. It was almost 5 o'clock in the morning. I heard a slight tapping at the window in my room. I walked there slowly, not knowing what awaited me. On the ledge perched a huge bald eagle that looked too large to be there. I opened the window and Rachel came inside and demorphed. She looked at me, and I knew. She began to cry. "Oh God, Cassie. I'm so sorry. It happened so fast, one minute he was behind us, then next he was gone, the pool collapsed around him." She sobbed. My knees failed me and my vision went black as the world began to spinâ€¦

To be continuedâ€¦

[ Like I said they are older teens here and don't even try to tell me high school age people don't have babies, I see enough pregnant girls at school to know they do.]

End  
file.